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The PALIMPSEST

AUGUST 1947

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

THE MEANING OF PALIMPSEST

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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THE PALIMPSEST

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Willson Alexander Scott

In the spring of 1843 Captain James Allen with a company of United States Dragoons moved westward from Fort Sanford to the juncture of the Des Moines and Racoon rivers. There they erected a fort and such other buildings as were needed. The task assigned to them was that of protecting the Sauk and Fox Indians against the incursions of white settlers until the fall of 1845, when the treaty signed in 1842 required that the Indians give up their hunting grounds in Iowa.

Food for the men and provender for the horses must necessarily be produced in the local area or obtained through purchase or barter, and a few artisans, traders, and farmers were needed. In this capacity a number of white civilians were permitted to reside within the limits of Fort Des Moines or in the vicinity nearby. Willson Alexander Scott and his cousin, John B. Scott, were among the favored few who obtained these special

permits to establish farms within the Indian country, provided they raised corn, hay, and other farm products to supply the garrison. The gardens of the soldiers lay along the north and south banks of the Raccoon River and the civilian settlement was located on the east side of the Des Moines River. There the Scott cousins — "Aleck" and J. B. — erected a log trading post and carried on an extensive trade with the Indians.

Aleck Scott, as he was usually called, was one of the men who made a real contribution to the history of Iowa. When Fort Des Moines was established, he was twenty-five years of age, for he was born in Crawford County, Indiana, on November 20, 1818. His family, like many others, rested in Indiana on the way from Virginia to Illinois. As a youth, Willson Alexander Scott lived amid pioneer surroundings and his early education was obtained in the schoolhouse on his father's farm in Illinois. He may have attended Illinois College at Jacksonville, Illinois, for a brief time. Somewhere along the way, at any rate, he studied higher mathematics and surveying, and he was interested for a time in the practical problems of civil engineering. Possessed by the spirit of adventure and the love of pioneer life, young Scott migrated to Iowa in 1841. Pausing for a season in Jefferson County, he soon moved on westward and thus be-

came one of the first settlers at the present site of Des Moines.

Scott carried on his activities as a trader and farmer, serving both the garrison and the Indians, until the Sauk and Fox began their reluctant withdrawal to their new lands in Kansas in 1845. Then he moved with them in the capacity of a trader; but his sojourn in Kansas was very brief. When the garrison vacated Fort Des Moines on March 10, 1846, Scott knew that settlers would soon be permitted to purchase lands in that vicinity. He returned to the junction of the Raccoon and Des Moines rivers and purchased five hundred acres on the east bank of the Des Moines River. Later this land came to be "the principal part of the East Side of the City of Des Moines", including a major part of the present State Capitol grounds. Just south of what is now Capitol Hill, Mr. Scott built a double log cabin, consisting of "two log houses, one serving as a dwelling and the other as a stable, with a roofed space connecting them, used as a shelter for wagons, machinery, etc."

As the town of Fort Des Moines developed at the former site of the fort, west of the Des Moines River, settlers located on both sides of the river, and as migration increased from east to west across Iowa, facilities for crossing the Des Moines

River became essential and John B. Scott commenced operating the first ferry across the river on May 1, 1846. It is also recorded that "Aleck Scott put on a flatboat ferry in 1846 and did a profitable business."

Farming and ferrying, however, did not exhaust the energies of this sturdy pioneer. In January, 1847, the board of county commissioners began to plan for the erection of a courthouse and, after various plans had been considered and rejected, specifications for a two-story brick building were agreed upon. Bids were advertised for and it was ordered that the contract be let at the January, 1848, meeting. Scott was among those who presented bids. Although his bid was not accepted, it is indicative of his building and property interests.

In 1847, Scott was given a license by the Polk County commissioners to operate a ferry across both the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers. It is said that the license was validated by the imprint of a half-dollar because the county had no official seal.

When the town of Fort Des Moines was incorporated in 1851 the council sought ways and means of increasing its revenue but, as one writer stated, the "ways were many but the means were few." The ferry committee of the council wanted

to impose a license fee on Mr. Scott. Scott, however, contended that he had a perpetual commission to run the ferry, given him by old Chief Keokuk, and if this right were lost, he contended, it did not thereby go to the newly established town.

The town council then sought to build a foot-bridge across the river, but there was objection to this on the ground that it would interfere with water transportation on the river. At length a compromise was reached by which it was agreed that Scott should continue to operate his ferry over both the Des Moines and Racoon rivers, but that doctors and the mails should be carried free.

When the ferry was first established the rates of toll were very reasonable — footman, 5 cents; horseman, $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents; wagon and "span of horses", $37\frac{1}{2}$ cents. During the days of the rush of emigrants to California and the gold fields, however, the ferryman was busy and toll rates were increased. It is reported that there were occasions when six hundred horses and as many people were ferried across the river in a single day. After he had operated a ferry for two years Scott built a floating toll bridge at what later came to be called the Grand Avenue crossing. This did not prove a success; it was too long when the river was low and too short during the high water season. Scott therefore continued to operate his

ferries for several years. Later he built a trestle bridge over the Des Moines at Market Street.

But Scott was more than a ferryman and a builder of bridges. He had many other interests and activities. When early settlers came into the Polk County area in considerable numbers, it was necessary to form a claim association to protect themselves against speculators. Willson Alexander Scott was one of the first men to sign a resolution to form such an association. In 1849 Asa Flemming and B. Perkins, both members of the Association, claimed title to the same piece of land. One day, when Perkins, the contesting claimant, was found near the Flemming claim, he was shot and wounded. He fled to Fort Des Moines where he swore out a warrant for Flemming. When the settlers heard that Flemming had been arrested, an armed and threatening mob formed south of the Raccoon River to obtain his release and applied to Aleck Scott to transport them across the river. Scott, however, refused to do so until their guns were stacked and other weapons removed. Thus it appears that a serious riot may have been averted by the sagacious and resolute ferryman.

Scott apparently continued to live in his double log cabin south of Capitol Hill until 1849. In that year he launched out more widely in the real estate business. On November 2, 1849, the *Iowa*

Star reported that "Messrs. Buckingham, Dean and Scott commenced the survey of their addition to Fort Des Moines today. This addition is on the east bank of the Des Moines River directly opposite town, and well situated for business. We learn the lots will be in market soon."

The town of Fort Des Moines (later named Des Moines) was originally platted on July 8, 1846. The Scott and Dean addition, east of the river, seems to have been the first addition to the original plat, and was recorded on November 19, 1849. The plat of the addition and the filing agreement were signed by W. A. Scott and Luesa (Louisa) Scott, his wife, and by John S. Dean and Nancy Dean, his wife.

Some time prior to this date Mr. Scott had married Mrs. Luesa Jayne, the widow of an Indian interpreter and friend. Mrs. Scott, of French and Indian parentage, was described as "an exceedingly attractive woman, a good housekeeper, and noted for her taste in dress." It was, however, reported that she had a strong appetite for "fire-water", and that, on occasions, she would put on full Indian regalia and take time out from her home duties to go on an extensive "spree", after which "she would resume her wifely duties in a very proper manner." There were, it seems, no children.

When Scott laid out his new addition in East Des Moines, he erected several dwellings, among them a large brick house, a combination residence and hotel, which came to be known as the "Scott House". Later it was known as the "Hawkeye" and still later, after Scott's day, as the "Refuge of Sin". He also laid off his land into town lots which he sold at a substantial profit.

During the busy years of the gold rush Scott traded extensively with emigrants, organized and equipped various emigrant groups, and is thought to have made two trips to California. In April, 1850, Scott's brother, C. L. Scott, passed through Fort Des Moines, on his way to California. When he arrived at Fort Des Moines he found that grain was selling for from \$1.50 to \$2.00 per bushel. Luckily for him, he had previously written to "Alex" to purchase grain for him, which he had done, paying 35 cents per bushel. The brother reported that he "found Alex well and making from forty to fifty dollars per day."

Soon after Iowa was admitted into the Union as a State there was agitation for a removal of the capital from Iowa City to a more central location within the State, and in 1855 a law was passed which provided that the seat of government should be located "within two miles of the junction of the Des Moines and Racoon rivers in Polk county".

This gave rise to a contest to determine whether it should be located on the east or west side of the Des Moines River. Scott had laid out upwards of eight hundred lots on the east side which were selling from one hundred to three hundred dollars per lot. He believed that they would double in price in one year and that "they would more than do that" if the capitol were built on the east side of the river.

Residents on both sides of the Des Moines contended vigorously for the capitol site. Fort Des Moines and the settlers west of the river seemed to have the advantage. A donation of twenty acres of land, valued at nearly \$100,000, and the possibility of purchasing at a fair price other lands worth nearly \$200,000, were inducements offered by citizens living west of the river.

Members of the locating commission, however, favored a site east of the river, and on April 21, 1856, a tract of land containing a little more than ten acres, donated by Willson Alexander Scott and Harrison Logan, was selected as the site for the new capitol building. The location was described by Governor James W. Grimes as "a gentle swell of land about three quarters of a mile east of Fort Des Moines, and on the east side of the river. It commands a good prospect and seems to be well adapted to the purpose for which it has

been selected." This area is designated in the records as "Capitol Square" and is the site of the present State Capitol. Thomas K. Brooks and Willson A. Scott also conveyed five and sixty-one hundredths acres of land to the State of Iowa. This was located a little south and east of Capitol Square and was familiarly known as "Governor's Square".

To provide a building to be used as a capitol without cost to the State, Scott and a group of associates erected a temporary capitol building south of Capitol Square at a cost of \$37,000. Scott was one of the building contractors and contributed "the lion's share" in both labor and materials. When the building was completed it was leased to the State for an indefinite period "for the sum of one dollar per annum".

Scott, however, saw more than financial success in the site of Des Moines. He admired the beauty of his surroundings; he loved the lofty aspects of the hilltop and the broad views that it afforded. Standing with friends one day at a point not far from the site of the present State Capitol, looking across the rich valley of the Des Moines River, and viewing the wide expanse of his own broad acres, he said: "When I die I want to be buried here, where we stand." His wish was granted all too soon.

The first half of the decade of the fifties made Scott a prosperous and influential man, and he was widely known for his generosity. Indeed he was generous to a fault. When no capitol building was available, he set about to build one. When money was not available for removing the records from Iowa City to Des Moines, Scott agreed that the necessary "funds would be advanced" by interested citizens. When the General Assembly first convened in Des Moines, he entertained the members lavishly in his large brick house. When his sister was married he gave "a large and splendid party". To his nieces and nephews in Illinois he was known as the mysterious uncle in the West who sent beautiful toys, lovely hats and dresses, "also jewelry, — lockets, and necklaces, bracelets, rings and brooches made from nuggets he had brought from the mines of California". To his young sisters he sent "fine riding horses, and to his father many horses" — among others a valuable team of "matched grays".

But prosperity may vanish like a fleeting cloud. Early in 1857 Willson Alexander Scott reached the height of his prosperity. He was a large landowner, a prominent citizen, and had been elected to the city council at the election held on May 4th. But in the fall of that year hard times set in. His generosity in the building of a capitol and in donat-

ing liberally to every cause had seriously drained his resources and he had incurred obligations which endangered his property. Still a comparatively young man — scarcely forty — with the spirit of adventure strong within him, he joined an expedition leaving for the gold fields. Like all Argonauts, he hoped to regain his fortune and return to Iowa's capital city a rich man. As the party left Des Moines, in June, 1859, Scott jestingly remarked to his friends that he would "make a Fourth of July speech on Pike's Peak".

Alas, he did not reach his destination and he never retrieved his fortune. After a few days' illness on the plains of Nebraska on the way west, he died near Fort Kearney on June 23, 1859, despite the efforts of a surgeon from the Fort. Remembering his wish to be buried on Capitol Hill, at a point overlooking the wide valley of the Des Moines River, friends and relatives arranged for the return of his body to the capital city, and there, on November 1, 1859, it was interred in accordance with his request. Masons and Odd Fellows joined in honoring the memory of the pioneer member of both orders.

For many years Willson Alexander Scott rested in an unmarked grave. In 1884 citizens of Des Moines presented a petition to the General Assembly asking for an appropriation to fence the

lot and to provide a suitable monument, but no action was taken. In 1902, Henry Scott, of New York City, a nephew of the sturdy Iowa pioneer, came to Des Moines with plans for the erection of an elaborate granite monument to cost some \$30,000. But this project, likewise, failed to become a reality.

Year after year tributes were paid to Willson Alexander Scott, "Donor of the State House Grounds", year after year there was talk of building a monument, but no monument was erected. For a time a wooden fence surrounded the burial lot, but at length that disappeared. For a time a lonely tree shaded the grave, but eventually that, likewise, was removed. In 1913 a large boulder was placed at the grave by the Historical Department of Iowa. Finally, in 1923, the Fortieth General Assembly appropriated \$500 for a "suitable memorial monument".

A suitable marker provided by this appropriation was erected in 1925. It stands on a knoll on the Capitol grounds and engraved on the marker is a brief biography of Willson Alexander Scott "who gave to the state of Iowa the greater part of the land where stands the capitol". The account concludes with the statement that his body "was here interred in earth which, as his homestead, had been exempted from seizure for his debts."

Scott was a sturdy pioneer, who builded better than he knew. He gave generously; but, in a sense, he retained what he gave away. Although he died a poor man and his grave was unmarked for many years, he is not forgotten. His early contributions to Iowa remain always his rich heritage and his grave on the crest of Capitol Hill is today an honored spot. Above it rises the dome of the State Capitol he envisioned, around it lies a great city he helped to locate. What greater monument could a man ask?

JACOB A. SWISHER

The Old Pottery Shop

Just a block off of the main street in present day Cedar Falls there stands a tiny, gray, weather-beaten shop, a strange contrast to the modern buildings which surround it. Quaint terra cotta letters above the low doorway read, "'Raabs Stoneware & Terra Cotta Works". The small-paned front windows are filled with pottery, vases, plates, teapots, cups, and saucers — a colorful contrast to the drab exterior. As one enters the shop he is intrigued by the antique appearance of the low ceilings and the faded flowered carpeting on the floor, and curiosity may make him ask, "What is the history of this shop?"

In 1859, when Cedar Falls was still little more than a village, Martin White opened his terra cotta manufactory, the first pottery works in Cedar Falls, and probably the first in the valley of the Cedar River. White operated his shop alone for sixteen years. In 1875 he formed a partnership with John Raab, an Austrian immigrant, and for a few years the two men manufactured pottery together. Finally Martin White sold out to John Raab & Son, and Raab's Stoneware & Terra Cotta Works came into being.

Long before this the name of Raab in pottery had been established throughout Silesia, Austria, where at least five generations of John Raab's ancestors had been pottery artists. In the early 1870's, John Raab, his wife, Johanna, and their children decided to leave their beautiful Austrian home and emigrate to the United States. They located first in Philadelphia where they lived for nearly a year. Their original plan was to remain in Philadelphia, but some friends told them of greater opportunities in the West and they came to Iowa. In 1875, when they arrived in Cedar Falls by train, the city had a population of 3,000 persons, and milling was one of the main industries.

After the Raabs purchased and moved into Martin White's terra cotta works on Water Street (now State Street), they set things in readiness for their manufacturing. At the rear of the house they established their workshop with kilns in which to bake the clay, a potter's wheel constructed almost in miniature to fit the work-stooped body of John Raab, and terra cotta forms about the chimney and cornice. Remains of these may still be seen in the back of the shop.

At the front of the house they built a small one-story salesroom which is still being used for that purpose. On the facade above the low front door

they placed their terra cotta sign — Raab's Stoneware & Terra Cotta Works. Years later a painter removed these letters before painting the building and, in replacing them, forgot where to put the apostrophe. Amusingly enough, he placed it before the name Raab, where it remains to this day. John Raab also made terra cotta rosettes to be set in the foundation blocks and along the frieze board under the eaves. These, too, are part of the decoration on the present shop.

Between the salesroom and the workshop were the rooms in which the Raabs lived. These serve as additional salesrooms today, but originally no one was permitted to enter them unless he was a close friend of the Raab family.

At first John Raab devoted most of his time to the making of drain tiles and sewer pipes, stone jars and crocks, for these were much in demand. But John Raab had been trained to be an artist and these utilitarian articles gave him little chance to express himself creatively. He worried lest his customers should think of him only as a maker of sewer pipes and stone jars and he was happy indeed when, after a few years, time permitted him to devote himself to the manufacture of his beloved majolica and terra cotta pieces. Some of his lovely sand-colored vases, decorated with dainty flowers, are still in the possession of the

owners of the shop. Mr. Raab first used local clay for his pottery, but it was too porous to be practical, so he soon turned to clays shipped from western Iowa, Michigan, or Illinois. A picture, probably taken in the 1890's, shows John and Johanna Raab standing beside their shop. The windows are filled with pieces made by John's hand — crocks and jars and the daintier vases, jugs, and animal figurines.

William Raab, John's dreamer-inventor son, was part owner of the pottery for a time. In 1881 he invented a terra cotta double and triple flue chimney to be used in baking the clay. This chimney was much advertised in its day and agents throughout the Middle West took orders for it. Peter Melendy, in his *Historical Record of Cedar Falls* (1893), lists seven other inventions by William Raab, including clay cuts to be used for printing, an automatic railway signal, and a typewriter. A foot-warmer which was patented by William Raab is now owned by the museum at Iowa State Teachers College. An interesting example of William's artistic genius is a tiny replica of Rebecca's jug which he made from clay imported from Palestine. On it he engraved the Lord's Prayer with a very fine needle.

William Raab, however, was a dreamer and not always reliable. An amusing story is told in con-

nection with his duties in the shop. John Raab was apparently a stern taskmaster, and, as this story would indicate, also a shrewd one. Since it was often necessary to bake the clay for forty-eight or fifty hours at a time, it fell to some member of the Raab family to stay up all night and keep the kilns fired. It was quite natural that this duty should frequently be assigned to William, the only son. But William sometimes fell asleep and let the fire get low, so his father devised a method of checking up on him. Before going to bed Mr. Raab would carefully count out the number of pieces of wood required to keep the kiln burning all night. If any of the sticks of wood remained the following morning, William suffered the consequences of his father's judgment.

Johanna Raab was a loyal helper to her husband. She assisted in tinting and glazing the pottery, took her turn at watching the kilns during long baking periods, and had a good head for business. She must have been a hospitable homemaker, for it is said that often at night the Raabs had so many visitors that the floors were covered with beds. Many times these were immigrants who were passing through. Due to the confusion of names these people often got off, or were put off, at Cedar Falls when they wanted to go to Cedar Rapids. In such cases, the station master,

who had difficulty in understanding the foreigners, would direct them to the Raab house on State Street where he knew they would be sure of a hospitable welcome.

In November, 1908, John Raab, then nearing eighty, died. An incident connected with his death serves as an example of this immigrant's interest in the government of his adopted land. Both Mr. and Mrs. Raab had taken a keen interest in American politics following their arrival in this country. Mr. Raab, a staunch Democrat even on his deathbed, anxiously awaited the outcome of the presidential election of 1908. William Jennings Bryan, Democrat, was opposing William Howard Taft, Republican. It is reported that John Raab died twenty minutes after Taft's election was announced.

Following her husband's death, Johanna Raab, assisted by her daughter, Pauline, became the operator of the pottery shop. The seventy-eight-year-old widow was a clever businesswoman, and the shop prospered under her hand even though she was forced to use pottery from other kilns. Mrs. Raab died in 1930 at the age of one hundred. Although she never learned to speak English, Mrs. Raab was admired and loved by those who knew her in the Cedar Falls community.

Pauline Raab, who loved the little pottery shop

and all the traditions connected with it, continued to manage the business until 1940 when she, too, died. And thus after sixty years the Raab Pottery Shop passed into strangers' hands.

Yet Mrs. John Lemmer, one of the present owners, could scarcely be called a stranger. The Lemmers had been close friends of the Raab family for over fifty years, and had come to appreciate them and their work. As the new proprietor of the shop, following Pauline Raab's death, Mrs. Lemmer tried to keep everything just as it had been under the Raabs. Today she is assisted in the shop by Mrs. James McKillup. Although they have filled the shelves with modern pottery, china-ware, and glassware, some of the original vases and pitchers made by the gnarled hands of John Raab still remain in the shop to pay mute tribute to the artistic genius of their maker. The name has been changed to The Old Pottery Shop, but many customers still refer to it as the Raab Pottery Shop.

In recent years the shop has been quite widely publicized. The *Crockery and Glass Journal* for August, 1942, and the *Gift and Art Buyer* for October, 1942, published articles on it. It is credited with being the oldest shop of its kind in the United States. Last year the Cedar Falls branch of the American Association of University Women chose

the shop as their project, compiling an interesting booklet with pictures and comments. Many visitors from all parts of the country come annually to the little shop, now nearly ninety years old. They linger awhile to admire its quaint charm and to purchase the fine quality wares there displayed — imported pottery from England, Bavaria, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Mexico, and Brazil, or domestic pottery from well-known American factories.

Artists, too, have been frequent visitors at The Old Pottery Shop and they have been eager to reproduce its unique exterior in oils, charcoal, or water colors. Even Grant Wood, shortly before his death in 1942, asked permission to portray the shop on his canvas. Unfortunately, he did not live to accomplish this work.

Today The Old Pottery Shop stands as a monument to the industry and craftsmanship of an Austrian immigrant and his family. As such, it is one of Black Hawk County's interesting historical sites.

CORNELIA MALLETT BARNHART

An Old Autograph Album

In the 1870's the graceful two-story house of Peter Patrick Freeman, successful grocer in Iowa City, stood on Washington Street, where today rises the stream-lined building of the Iowa City *Press-Citizen*. The roof was sharply gabled and a pillared porch extended across the front and along one side. Within were high-ceilinged rooms with slender windows reaching to the floor. In the spacious parlors, floors were richly carpeted to the baseboard. Pieces of French-styled furniture, supported on delicate legs, were, perhaps, more ornamental than trustworthy. Their backs and seats were frames of walnut upholstered in pastel-shaded materials with an elaborate flower design so thickly padded as to cause discomfort for a too patient sitter.

Gold-framed paintings were of the best type of a period which discarded dignified steel engravings for the closer intimacy of portrayal in color. A tall mirror, encased in a moulded gilt frame, rose above the mantel and seemed to increase the depth of the parlors. Dangling crystals from intricate chandeliers tossed back twinkling lights and heightened the air of opulence which aided

the social background of four popular and attractive daughters.

Helen, the eldest, became eighteen on July 4, 1872; she was then entitled to enter "society" and "receive" young men callers. My imagination pictures her from childhood memories as she was when she became my aunt by marrying my uncle, Edward E. Brainerd. Dressed in the flowing skirts and the frills and furbelows of the period, she belonged in the formal parlor. Light, wavy hair was caught back loosely with a curl or two lingering along her neck. Her blue eyes were set off by her creamy skin and her delicate coloring was unemphasized by rouge or lipstick.

It is not surprising that her home in this mid-western university town was well supplied with young men callers. Of this there are indications in her old autograph album, today the treasured possession of her daughter, Mrs. Joseph F. Keirnan, of Kansas City, Missouri. The little book measures about six and one-half by four and one-half inches and is bound in leather, deep blue in color, tooled in gold around the edges, with the owner's name, Helen M. Freeman, in capitals on the front. To a considerable extent, the contents are not impersonal signatures, but a collection of poetic contributions, often original. The penmanship is frequently Spencerian.

The source of the album itself is not indicated. It bears no date nor any name of the giver. The opening leaf has an inscription on each side. On the first page some one wrote in shaded Spencerian:

My album's open, come and see
What! wont you waste a thought on me?
Write but a word, a word or two
And make me love to think on you.

On the reverse side, admonitions being essential for genteel young ladies of those days, sweeping strokes present Pope's famous lines:

Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll;
Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.

Thus was Helen launched upon the next five years, bearing in her hands a tacit invitation to flattery and praise from the gallant sex, weaponed only with the warning on behalf of merit against the wiles of beauty.

Among earlier contributions are some stereotyped lines, evidently current for this popular pastime, but leaving much to be desired in the way of meter:

Storms may not retard us always,
Brighter days will soon be here.
Sorrow may oppress us often,
Yet the jubilee is near; and as

You take your Western journey,
 Let this reflection light your way
 Nature's darkest hour is always
 Just before the break of day.

O. J. Wolcott

A sincere evasion of the treacherous path of poetic fancy is dated May 21, 1873:

The most extravagant expressions of regard would fail to express my esteem for and admiration of the lady at whose request the undersigned autograph is written.

N. G. Ishbell

More subtle was Edward Chase, a smart young man who wrote this testimony to Helen's charm and beauty, addressing it to "Ah Sin":

To tell your *faults* would be too *thin*,
 So this I'll leave to brother Finn.
 To sing your *praises* would make me hoarse,
 So this I'll leave to Charlie Vorse.

Your Friend Edward C. Chase

"Brother Finn" (C. L. Finn, a law student) reciprocated with:

Ah Sin

Had I the power to trace
 The way in which you *turn* and *pace*
 From the deck's bottom, in the face
 Of old "Experts" like Doctor Chase
 In law 'twould win me every case
 On Earth I'd lack no rank nor place

But be the foremost in "Life's race"
To get to Heaven I'd not need "grace".
Its golden streets I'd walk apace
And crowd the Angels into space
Entice St. Peter from his place
Open the door and let in "Chase".

Was it Charlie Vorse who wrote?:

Could I think that other faces
Would of me blot out all traces
From remembrance than endeavor
Not to blot me out forever. Chas.

A single page dated January 1, 1874, seems to contain a list of New Year's callers. Among the signers were Perry E. Clark, who became a banker and skilled horseman, and James E. Berryhill, a future prominent lawyer in Des Moines. Carroll Wright, a future Des Moines lawyer and attorney for the Rock Island Railway, contributed, in a forthright masculine hand, a Scotch quotation. Charles Baker, then on the way to his place as a leading attorney in Iowa City, wrote his name in sturdy strokes. A rising clothier, Fred Sawyer, offered in delicate script a few lines suitable for a primary Sunday school class, from *Harper's* for August, 1873.

An interesting contribution is signed by W. J. Welch. Possibly Mr. Welch had already begun to develop "The Dresden", a superior china shop.

His Haviland sets were stamped on the bottom, "Made in Limoges, France, for Willard J. Welch, The Dresden, Iowa City, Iowa." In these lines we see intimations of his artistic nature:

Of thoughts and sayings well expressed
In this little book at thy request
I find they all do imbibe the same
Spirit of address, to thy good name.
La belle Helene doth oft appear
The truth of which could I re-echo here!
But as it is, so let it be,
For of all the tributes payed to thee,
There's none but what are justly due,
And these I heartily repeat anew.
For virtues rare and elegant grace,
Mirrored all, reflect thy face.
Now I close. This favor extend —
Be ever my true, sincere friend!

W. J. Welch

John P. Irish, the editor of the *Democratic Press* in Iowa City, and a Democratic leader in the State, had served a term in the State legislature and had exerted a determining influence in establishing the Law College of the State University. He must have been barely thirty, with these mature activities already in his record, when, on April 3, 1874, he responded to Helen's request for "something" in her album. Library research uncovers no trace in any collection of verse, humor-

ous, or otherwise, of this clever bit, and we conclude that this touch of genius was offered solely for Helen's benefit.

Leda's little daughter, Helen,
Whose papa was a swan,
Of all fair girls in Attica
Was fairer than the dawn.
Ulysses loved her warmly,
And Ajax sued in vain,
For Menelaus was her favorite
And beat the royal twain.
But — fair Helen, false Helen!
Helen, wooed and won!
Parisian fashions ruined her,
As they often since have done.
Shall we blame the Grecian maiden?
Shall Troy's blood be on her head?
Is there not a maiden's reason
For the prankly life she led?
Her three good Grecian lovers
Weighed her worth in coarser scale,
As cold lovers weigh a sweetheart,
Like a fleece, or cotton bale.
But the Helens are all *jewels* —
Diamonds, at their best estate,
And like her should all be valued
By their lovers at *Troy* weight.

John P. Irish

W. W. Baldwin, of Burlington, a future attorney for the Burlington and Quincy Railway, made his contribution on May 9, 1875.

Amidst these intellectual flowers
Reared and culled in Cupid's balmy bowers
I have placed an Ivy, which when you see
Think of its emblem and of Will W. B.

In the back of the book, under the date February 9, 1876, Edward M. Doe, a willing admirer but a reluctant poet, wrote:

Helen

To give you praise in words is but your due
In rhyme — since you request — 'tis proper too.
With hair of gold and cheeks of rosy hue
To give your charms of which you've not a few
Each separate one its special meed and due
In short to show to ev'ry one that you
Are just the sweetest girl that ever grew
But then the measure (d-nt) wont come true
And what the D—I can a fellow do
So for the deed pray take the will in lieu
And ever let us be good friends and true.

An interesting feature is the number of foreign language quotations, a forgiveable display in the period when advanced education was highly prized. We have referred to the Scotch of Carroll Wright. George W. Lewis, a future grocer in Iowa City, used his inherited Welsh: *Eich Dyn*. Two young ladies wrote in French, probably learned in a convent. C. J. Dodge, from Burlington, son of Augustus Caesar Dodge, gallantly wrote, "*Amicos meos amo.*" A message in

Greek script is conveniently translated — "My life I love you." Another contributor wrote in German script, "Ohne Gast und ohne Ruhe".

On a few pages in the latter half of the album are pasted slips of paper bearing autographs of well-known public writers and speakers, possibly some of those who appeared on the lecture platform in the city. The signature of George William Curtis, the distinguished editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* and polished essayist, is written in delicate flowing style, including his address, "West New Brighton, L. Island, N. Y. Oct 6/74." The signature, Bret Harte, is written in small, neat, regular letters with the final "e" swept into a straight reverse line below. On a slip of ruled paper, in careless, self-assured hand is "Yrs truly R. G. Ingersoll." It may be noted that none of these vigorous, original thinkers used the Spencerian penmanship.

To complete this group of national celebrities, we turn to the year 1876. Theodore Tilton, famous in pre-Civil War days as a strong Abolitionist and well-known as a popular lecturer, undoubtedly won Helen's admiration. We may picture her, an appealing beauty of twenty-two, timidly offering her request in the hotel parlor. The gallant lecturer, at a writing desk with convenient pen and ink, in rotund strokes, greets her thus:

In this Centennial year, I bear you a hundred wishes for a thousand blessings on your head and heart — on your home and life.

Theodore Tilton

Much entertaining material has been necessarily omitted, but this little book of seventy years ago bears silent witness to a friendly social atmosphere, a bit of teasing fun, flattery, and refreshing spontaneity. We offer tribute to Helen Freeman's persuasive skill with her guests, and we add our appreciative thanks to the many who contributed in the spirit of friendly coöperation and "a good time".

FRANCES L. ROGERS

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